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NSC BRIEFING

22 January 1958

GUATEMALA

I. Returns from 19 January presidential election, which are probably reliable and about 93% complete, give rightist General Ydigoras a small plurality, centrist candidate Cruz Salazar a close second place with leftist Mendez Montenegro trailing not far behind.

A.	Ydigoras	154,000	37%)	Percentages of votes counted thus far.
	Cruz	136,000	33)	(30,000 still uncounted)
	Mendez	125,000	30)	

1. US Embassy source expects many of the uncounted votes to go to Cruz.

2. It is therefore conceivable that Cruz may win a narrow plurality. At any rate, he is now definitely in the running.

B. Election returns issued by President Flores late on 20 January were apparently deliberately falsified to show Ydigoras in strong lead, Mendez second and Cruz trailing. The true count shown above has not yet been publicly announced. But it cannot be kept secret for long.

1. Flores may have calculated that by doing this he would provoke an immediate coup by anti-Ydigoras officers and that the result would be to perpetuate him in office.

2. Or, it could have been a humbling effort to help Ydigoras.

C. Since no candidate can win an absolute majority, congress will be constitutionally charged with choosing between the two top runners.

1. Congress scheduled to meet on 24 January, process may take several days.

State Dept. review completed

2. Still no word on the 33 (of 66) congressional seats at stake. Old congress decides presidential issue.

II. Situation ripe for trouble. President Flores' fake returns have heightened already serious tensions and have probably increased Ydigoras' determination to gain the presidency by any means at his disposal.

A. Ydigoras expects to be named president by congress and says if he is not: "I would not make trouble, but the people would."

1. A clear threat to call out his street mobs.

B. Leaders of the Communist-infiltrated Revolutionary Party (PR) have announced that Ydigoras should be named president.

1. PR has all along preferred Ydigoras over Cruz and may again call out its mobs to join those of Ydigoras in street rioting.

2. Communists also prefer Ydigoras and have decided to join any group fighting Cruz' coming to power, [REDACTED]

C. Congress is likely to name Cruz president-elect, if he is a close runner-up. Congress contains a strong majority which supports Cruz and thoroughly dislikes Ydigoras.

1. If congress does not name Cruz, it might prefer to disband, thus breaking constitutional order and inviting a military coup, rather than name Ydigoras.

D. The army is the key. Influential officers hate Ydigoras and may seize the government before they would permit Ydigoras to come to power.

1. The strongest army faction opposed to Ydigoras is led by Col. Carlos de Leon, former police chief and now "co-ordinator of departmental governors."
 2. A coup would spark serious popular protests by supporters of Ydigoras and the PR. It might worsen already existing divisions in the army.
- E. Cruz Salazar, in a 20 January statement, has paved the way for a possible coup.
1. He said some of his supporters were denied the right to vote by pistol-packing Ydigoristas.
 2. And added: "I really don't believe there was honesty in these elections. I believe something happened that was not very clean."

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